

Melancon Began Calling for Increased Mental Health Services in May
August 16, 2010

WASHINGTON, DC — Today, U.S. Congressman Charlie Melancon (LA-03) made the following statement in response to BP's announcement that the company would provide \$15 million to the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals for mental health services for individuals impacted by the oil disaster in the Gulf. The announcement comes almost three months after Congressman Melancon first began pushing for increased mental health services in Louisiana in response to the oil leak. Almost two months have passed since Congressman Melancon [called on BP to cancel executive bonuses](#) and redirect the payments to mental and behavioral health services in Gulf communities.

"I welcome BP's long overdue attention to the growing need for mental health services for people struggling to cope with the effects of the oil disaster," said Rep. Melancon. **"In several town halls I hosted in May, I first heard from Louisianians who said they were feeling more anxious, more depressed, and under more stress because of the leak and fears about what the future might hold. We have been working for almost three months now to hold BP accountable for the mental health ripple effects of the spill, and I am pleased they are finally taking this problem seriously."**

Congressman Melancon has worked to bring attention to the mental health needs of Louisianians impacted by the oil leak in the Gulf. After holding two town halls in May in oil-affected communities, Congressman Melancon [asked the federal government for assistance](#) in establishing temporary mental health services to help residents cope with the BP oil disaster in the Gulf.

Congressman Melancon followed up in June with [a letter to BP](#) calling on the company to seriously address the rising number of mental health problems in Gulf communities caused by the oil disaster. In his letter to BP's Chairman, Congressman Melancon enclosed a request from Tulane University's School of Medicine, which operates the New Orleans East LA Community Health Center (NOELA CHC), describing their need for any additional funding to assist with their mental health outreach to the Vietnamese community.

[Click here](#)
to view the letter from Tulane.

Congressman Melancon also pushed the federal government to deploy a mobile health care clinic to Venice, La, to treat and screen workers and residents affected by the BP oil leak in the Gulf. The clinic arrived May 31st, following requests from Congressman Melancon to both [the President](#) and the [Secretary of Health and Human Services \(HHS\)](#).

Congressman Melancon represents in Congress the areas of coastal Louisiana most directly affected by the oil leak, including Plaquemines, St. Bernard, Terrebonne, Lafourche, St. Mary and southern Jefferson Parishes. The Deepwater Horizon platform was located 50 miles off the

coast of Louisiana's Third Congressional District.

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